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The Fierce Green Fire

A Newsletter of the Wofford College Environmental Studies Program



Writer and environmental activist, Rick Bass lectures during his visit to Wofford's Goodall Center in Glendale.

Photos courtesy of Mark Olencki

Volume 2, Issue 13

Rick Bass's Visit to Wofford College



ENVS students tour Glendale with Rick Bass during his visit to Wofford for the Santee Cooper Lecture Series on Sustainability and Energy.

Writer and activist Rick Bass visited Wofford on a windy November day as part of our Santee Cooper Series on Sustainability and Energy. During an afternoon visit to the Goodall Center he talked with students from environmental studies classes and walked the trails with them, pausing several times to answer questions.

Bass talked about his 20-year fight to save his home, Montana's isolated Yaak Valley, from logging and roads. About his efforts to establish wildness areas in the Yaak, he said, "You've heard all politics is local. That's not quite true. All politics is money." He said in his life as an activist he's recently found hope in the success of the food movement, and how those activists were often "not asking but giving, taking advantage of what all people want, good food."

That night in the large classroom of Wofford's soon-to-be LEED certified Phase V of the Village Bass (trained as a petroleum geologist) read from several different pieces that touch on oil and energy - a selection of short

sketches from his 1989 narrative *Oil Notes*, a fragment of an unfinished short story about a Mormon geologist on the Gulf coast, and the ending of a recent novella published in the book *Heart of the Monster*, written with writer David James Duncan to fight a highway in Montana for the transportation of "megaloads" from the Pacific coast to the tar sands of Alberta in Canada.

One of the most interesting, and in some ways disturbing, comments Bass made came during questions from the audience after the presentation. Bass said that he felt we are in a very volatile period of our country's history, a decade maybe as important as any since the original Revolution, and that the country could go either way. He didn't elaborate on what the two directions might be, but you could tell that he was both excited and a little apprehensive about the choice.

Having Bass at Wofford underscores the importance of different perspectives on important and complex environmental issues.

Upcoming Events and Opportunities

Have a Safe and Happy Holiday!

- December 17th** **SPACE Jingle Bell 5K Walk/Run:** Race starts at 9:00am at the District 7 Administration Building and runs along the Cottonwood Trail. Parking available on Dupre Drive in front of Spartanburg High School. Pre-registration: \$25 (\$20 –students 18 & under). Visit www.spartanburgconservation.org to register.
- December 28th** **Spartanburg Christmas Bird Count:** This annual event gives you an opportunity to observe and count the number of birds you find by species in a 24-hour period. Please contact Lyle Campbell, lcampbell@uscupstate.edu if you are interested in participating in this year's bird count.
- January 15th** **Abstract Submittal Deadline for South Carolina Environmental Conference:** SCEC is looking for poster presentations for the 2012 conference to be held March 11-13 in Myrtle Beach. Submit the form (available from Dr. Savage) and a one-page abstract describing the subject of your poster. Winners are awarded prizes and will present their work at the national conference in Dallas in June. Also, if you are interested in attending the March conference without submitting a poster, see Dr. Savage for more details.
- January 17th** **Fierce Green Fire Group** will begin meeting on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month starting in January for anyone interested in joining the group during Interim. Olin 210 at 6:00pm. Contact Katie Pearson, pearsonkr@email.wofford.edu.
- February 3rd** **Application Deadline – Harvard Forest Summer Research in Ecology:** 11-week session, May 21-August 3. Students are paid \$5500 stipend with housing and full meal plan (travel assistance also available). Information is posted on ENVS bulletin board or see Dr. Savage if you are interested.
- February 8th** **Next Santee Cooper Lecture Series:** Jack Byrne, Director of the Sustainability Integration Office at Middlebury College, will be on campus to talk about the current state of sustainability and higher education. 7:00pm in Olin Theater. Look for more information to follow on this program.
- February 15th** **Application Deadline - Santee Cooper's 2012 Environmental Intern Program:** Only 11 South Carolina college students will be chosen to participate in this year's program (May 21– July 27). Come by the ENVS office and talk to Dr. Savage for more information or talk to Bedford Wooten, intern from last summer.

GRAD SCHOOL PROFILE:

University of Oregon – Leadership in Sustainability Program

Oregon Leadership in Sustainability (OLIS) is a graduate certificate program offered by the University of Oregon that trains students in the concepts and skills of sustainability.

“This year-long program will equip you to play a key role in addressing the key sustainability issues of climate change, green economy, ecosystem services, green infrastructure, and social justice. This program provides leadership and sustainable systems knowledge that will enable participating

students to play a transformative role in creating just, prosperous, and ecologically sound city environments.”

OLIS is now accepting applications for the 2012-2013 academic year with a priority application deadline on February 1, 2012. See Dr. Savage if you are interested in this program and visit <http://olis.uoregon.edu> for more information on the program.